



Legislative Report

March 15, 2008

Bovine Tuberculosis Program Update

Provided by the Animal Industry Division
Michigan Department of Agriculture

General Information

Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Advisory Committee Meeting

The Michigan Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Bovine TB Advisory Committee provides cattle and cervid producers a forum to provide input on bovine TB eradication program activities. Cattle producers from the different TB zones in Michigan, special interest groups including the Michigan Cattlemen, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Deer and Elk Breeders, and Michigan Milk Producers, as well as Michigan State University Extension agents serve as voting members. Program experts from state and federal agencies serve as non-voting members.

Since the March 2007 United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) Bovine TB Eradication Program review, the advisory committee has played an expanded role in helping to develop bovine TB eradication strategies for cattle and cervid producers.

The advisory committee Chair, Chuck Preston formed a disease surveillance subcommittee in December 2007, which drafted a surveillance plan more in line with USDA recommendations. The subcommittee received input from USDA Veterinary Services (VS) Eastern Region staff. The MDA Bovine TB Advisory Committee met in Lansing on February 20, and after extensive discussion, endorsed the plan, which focuses on a more targeted testing approach for disease surveillance in the Modified Accredited Advanced Zone (MAAZ – the lower portion of the Lower Peninsula) in 2008.

The endorsed targeted surveillance plan was submitted to the USDA VS Eastern Regional Office in February. Until USDA VS approves the plan, MDA must continue with the current random surveillance testing. State and federal field staff are currently conducting circle testing of all cattle, bison, and cervids in Iosco and Shiawassee counties (see details below) where the 2007 bovine TB positive deer

were harvested. This testing applies to targeted surveillance activities, but not to random surveillance.

Livestock Industry, Wildlife, and Government Leadership Meeting

Michigan Farm Bureau hosted a meeting on February 25, 2008 with Michigan cattle industry and wildlife club leaders from both the public and private sectors. At the meeting, members agreed to investigate incentives and programs helping to eradicate bovine TB from Michigan. Key issues discussed included:

- Wildlife risk mitigation plans in the TB infected Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ).
- Targeted surveillance in the MAAZ and bovine TB-free Zone.
- Increased accountability for government agencies, livestock producers, landowners, and hunters.
- Linking agriculture and wildlife communities at the local level.

MDA is revising action plans to address the issues and ideas presented. Further meetings between MDA and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are scheduled to coordinate the activities of the two agencies.

Annual Cattle Surveillance Testing Status

USDA VS's Michigan office reported that Michigan met the annual surveillance requirement for the MAAZ and bovine TB-free Zones in 2007.

Zone	Annual Random Surveillance Requirement	Completed
Modified Accredited Zone	Annual herd test on anniversary date	Two herds are currently overdue – all others are current or scheduled for testing.
Modified Accredited Advanced Zone and Free Zone	800 herds	803 (includes herds tested by private practice veterinarians)

Note: MAAZ and bovine TB-free Zone surveillance updates are based on information provided by USDA VS Michigan office (as of February 28, 2008).

Currently, MDA field staff are focused on completing surveillance testing in the 10-mile circles in Iosco and Shiawassee counties. As these were unscheduled activities, resources have been redirected from other planned bovine TB eradication activities.

Iosco County

Two MDA employees were taken to the hospital this past month due to significant injuries (hand injury and dislocated shoulder) obtained during bovine

TB testing. They will be off work for several weeks. As of March 6, 2008, a total of 48 herds have been tested and 21 additional herds are scheduled for testing.

Shiawassee County

On February 27, DNR officials designated the free-ranging white-tailed deer found in Shiawassee County as bovine TB infected. The strain of bovine TB in this deer was confirmed to be the Michigan strain. Herd testing within the 10-mile circle began shortly after. Three herds have been tested to date and 70 herds have already been scheduled for testing. It will be approximately three weeks before testing is fully ramped up.

Due to the expanded workload associated with the Iosco County circle testing, and the potential for additional circle testing in Shiawassee County, Dr. Steve Halstead, State Veterinarian, requested support from USDA VS to assess how current resources can be used most efficiently. USDA VS sent an assessment team to Michigan from February 11-15, 2008. The team reviewed current testing capabilities and provided recommendations. Based on these recommendations, Michigan formed a local Incident Management Team (IMT), comprised of MDA and USDA VS staff, to oversee preparations for circle testing in Shiawassee County. This team is using the principles of incident command to coordinate multi-agency efforts.

Zonal Boundary Compliance

A total of 123 livestock vehicles were processed by MDA staff at the Agriculture Inspection Station located at the Mackinac Bridge in St. Ignace. Of these, 70 (57 percent) contained cattle. MDA staff found no violations in movement requirements at the bridge during the month of February.

Seven (six percent of all livestock vehicles) livestock vehicles drove past the MDA livestock check-point north of the Mackinac Bridge without stopping. Two of the seven were stopped and received information regarding the requirement to stop. Neither of the two vehicles was transporting cattle, bison, or cervids. In comparison to February 2007, we had 14 fewer drive-bys.

MDA staff trained eight Michigan State Police (MSP) Traffic Safety Officers and started 20 hours of surveillance per week on the border of the MAZ and MAAZ. During the month of February, MDA stopped five vehicles and found all the vehicle drivers to be in compliance with movement requirements regarding bovine TB.

Slaughter Surveillance and Slaughter Verification

There were 18,569 head of cattle scanned at Michigan Livestock Markets in February, 2008. The number of cattle marketed was down significantly compared to January, likely due to adverse weather conditions.

Weather continued to impact the electronic scanners at the markets with some missing a week of data. At the end of February, all readers were operating with no reported problems.

Slaughter facilities scanned 13,638 head of cattle in February, 2008. This was an increase from the previous month. MDA staff are working with one slaughter facility having problems transmitting data from the facility to the central database.

Education and Outreach

Public Meetings for Iosco and Ogemaw Counties

Iosco and Ogemaw County Farm Bureaus sponsored a public meeting in Prescott on February 27 including representatives from: MDA, DNR, Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA), Michigan Cattleman's Association, and USDA VS. Speakers answered citizen questions about testing requirements, wildlife risk mitigation, and wildlife management practices. A recurring theme was the agricultural and wildlife communities will need to work closely together if we are going to eradicate bovine TB.

MSU Veterinary Student intern

A Michigan State University veterinary student intern shadowed the risk communications specialist to further the development of messages related to wildlife risk mitigation strategies (WRMS). Information will eventually be mailed to farmers in the highest disease-risk areas. The student researched and provided material on practical reasons for adopting WRMS such as waste management and cost/benefit analogies. The document will accompany state publications and will be available at grass-roots/kitchen table and town hall meetings in the bovine TB Modified Accredited Zone of Northern Lower Michigan.

The student attended policy development meetings (external bovine TB advisory and town hall meetings), assisted in drafting an opinion/editorial for the Michigan Cattlemen magazine, and assisted in day-to-day operations related to communicating regulatory and health risk messages to the public - including preparation of materials for a presentation to the Michigan House Appropriations Agriculture Sub-Committee.